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—TERESA WATKINS, RADIO HOST/GARDEN WRITER

Every year, Garden Walk Buffalo—the largest free garden tour in the US—presents over 400 gardens to over 60,000 visitors from around the world. Celebrate a gardening scene that continues to bloom and grow at GardensInBuffalo.com.





CITY OF OUR HEARTS

In his new book, "City of My Heart," local historian and author Mark Goldman documents the decades-long effort to rebuild and reinvigorate Buffalo. In his telling of the tale, it's a success story 40 years in the making, requiring successive generations to pick up the yoke and do their part to bring Buffalo back to life. Whether it was helping to restore Shea's Buffalo Theatre, opening a pop-up restaurant in the West Side Bazaar, giving a tour of the Martin House, cleaning up an Olmsted park, welcoming visitors for Garden Walk Buffalo, painting a mural on the side of a downtown building or countless other examples of shared community spirit and pride of place, Buffalonians summoned the will to get the job done. Of course, cities are living, vibrant things and the job is never really finished. But 2023 does represent a kind of culmination of years of restoration and reconstruction. With the reopening this year of the expanded Buffalo AKG Art Museum, the former Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo is ready to celebrate its rebirth and share its hard-won revival with visitors from around the world. Welcome to the City of Our Hearts.

Ed Healy
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

TOP: Welcome Wall by Keir Johnston and Ernel Martinez. Photo by Ed Healy.



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Welcome to my Buffalo.

ON THE COVER

The 2023 edition of the Buffalo Niagara Touring Guide has been printed in three versions, each with a different cover.



Seymour Buffalo
Visit Buffalo Niagara's new mobile visitors center is spreading the word of Buffalo's comeback.
Photo: Eric Frick



Food Truck Tuesdays
Dozens of food trucks gather all summer long at Larkin Square for an evening of food and fun.
Photo: Rhea Anna



Bills Mafia
The Buffalo Bills have the most devoted fans and the best tailgating scene in the National Football League.
Photo: Nancy J. Parisi



ONE ARCHITECT. ONE FAMILY. **TWO HOUSES.**

Experience Frank Lloyd Wright in Western New York through the Martin family's city and summer homes, now fully restored.



PHOTOS: Matthew Digati

Martin House **GRAYCLIFF**

VISIT WRIGHTINWNY.ORG

AKG:

The Albright-Knox is now the Buffalo AKG



Opening Spring 2023

BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM



THE REBIRTH OF *Buffalo*

BY Ed Healy

REINTRODUCING THE QUEEN CITY

It was a warm summer evening as more than 500 bicyclists gathered in the shadow of Buffalo's Central Terminal for a Monday night ride organized by Slow Roll Buffalo. That week's 10-mile route was named "New Good Neighbors Ride" in recognition of the new immigrants from places like Bangladesh and Burma who are helping to repopulate the city. The diverse group of riders shared a sense of community and the joy of being together on their bikes as they set off down Paderewski Drive. It was a pedal party that not too long ago would have been unimaginable. Now it's just a typical happening in the new "unexpected Buffalo."

PHOTO: RiverWorks by Randy Duchaine





ABOVE: *The Martin House by Randy Duchaine*

In The Past

Slow Rolls, as well as any number of amenities, attractions, festivals, walks, talks and tours that today are woven deeply into the fabric of Buffalo, were not even a gleam in the city's collective imagination 40 years ago when Buffalo's reign as an industrial powerhouse was coming to an end.

As local historian Mark Goldman explains in the opening chapter of his new book, "City of My Heart," at that time there was no Olmsted Parks Conservancy, no Garden Walk, no Slow Roll, no Elmwood Festival of the Arts, no Elmwood Village, no Juneteenth, no Burmese Water Festival, no bike paths, no farmers markets. There were very few places to simply sit outside and have a cup of coffee. Buffalo was a post-industrial city that hadn't envisioned a future beyond industry.

Buffalo had been a classic 19th-century American boomtown, growing explosively after the Erie Canal connected the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes. As the western terminus of the canal, Buffalo became a center of shipping, flour milling, railroads and, eventually, industries like steel, automobile manufacturing and aerospace.

Buffalo became a wealthy city with aspirations to greatness that were reflected in its palatial homes, broad boulevards,

expansive parks, seminal cultural institutions and ambitious architecture.

By the middle of the 20th century, however, Buffalo's glory began to fade, and its legacy of greatness entered a long period of decline.

"Each time a cherished building was demolished, a park and parkway trashed, a piece of the waterfront despoiled, the people of Buffalo gradually began to lose their connection to their roots," Goldman said in an email exchange. "And as they did, their city, like a flower or plant, began to die."

Make Our Garden Grow

But to a small but passionate group of preservationists, urbanists and optimists, Buffalo was worth saving, a place with "good bones" still recognizable despite years of neglect. Not unlike the city's many mansions that had been subdivided, neglected or abandoned, Buffalo needed a new generation that recognized its charms. New hands and hearts had to bring it back from the brink. Buffalo needed love and commitment.

"There were people all over the city who never lost faith in themselves and in their city," Goldman writes. "People stared down decline, rolled up their sleeves, went to work and got it done."



The road to recovery hasn't always been smooth. It rarely proceeded in a straight line and sometimes inspired contentious community debate—a debate that occasionally found its way into the courts. But 40 years—and a couple of generations—into this ongoing community undertaking, Goldman asserts, Buffalo has found a way to “fix this place.”

“Preservation—of the man-made and natural environments—has helped to restore the soul of our city,” he writes.

Among the many residents who took up the challenge were the city's gardeners, including Jim and Leslie Charlier, who live in the Elmwood Village neighborhood. Their Lancaster Avenue garden is one of the highlights of [Garden Walk Buffalo](#), packed with curious crowds who come every summer with questions and compliments about the Charliers' shed in the style of their Dutch Colonial home, the Harry Potter-themed garden and the art collection that includes multi-colored poles that Jim Charlier designs and sells. As longtime participants in the walk, the Charliers have seen it evolve from a modest one-block affair in 1995 to what is now the largest free garden tour in the United States. It's the perfect grassroots illustration of how Buffalo has rolled up its sleeves and rebuilt itself.

“There is not one event or festival that shows off Buffalo better,” Jim Charlier said. “Getting people walking around neighborhoods, appreciating the gardens and architecture, getting to go into people's backyards and talk with the gardeners—where else does that happen?”

Another illustration of Buffalo's rebirth can be found across town on the patio at [Buffalo RiverWorks](#) on Ganson Street. On a late summer afternoon, it's filled with the din of conversation as servers come and go holding platters of chicken wings, beef on weck sandwiches and frosty mugs of beer brewed on site.

A newly erected Ferris wheel turns nearby, giving riders an unobstructed view of the Buffalo River and the kayaks, paddleboards and waterbikes darting across the water below. Cycleboats and River History Tours packed with people navigate around the sleek powerboats jockeying for position at the RiverWorks dock. What was once a desolate landscape at the defunct GLF grain elevator complex has become a destination full of life.

Examples like this abound, showing off the tremendous strides that have been made since the 1970s. As the city's fortunes revive and signs of progress replace the once all-too-common “For Sale” signs, there is still work to be done to ensure the rebirth reaches into every neighborhood.



TOP: Garden Walk by Jim Charlier

BOTTOM: Slow Roll by Jud Wieksnar

Preserving Cultural Heritage

The city's emerging **African American Heritage Corridor** on Michigan Avenue is a case of a previously overlooked asset joining the city's revival.

Anchored by the recently expanded Colored Musicians Club and Museum on Broadway, the Michigan Street Baptist Church—once a stop on the Underground Railroad—and the Nash House Museum on Nash Street, the Heritage Corridor celebrates African American history and the Black experience in America.

"Our Corridor revival efforts come at a time when nationwide protests over police brutality and systemic racism have sparked interest in history in general and African American heritage specifically," said Corridor Executive Director Terry Alford. "At one time, the early-20th-century Michigan Street birthed the likes of the Rev. Edward Nash and Mary Talbert, early champions of what we now know as social justice."

Buffalo is also investing in its legacy of historic architecture and cultural attractions. An expansive restoration and reconstruction of Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House and the surrounding campus was completed in 2020. Graycliff, another Wright home built for the Martin family in nearby Derby, is finishing a lengthy restoration and adding a new visitors center.

And there are more transformations on the way: **Shea's Buffalo Theatre**, in Main Street's Theater District, is expanding and enhancing visitor access and amenities, and is one of the most popular stops for touring Broadway shows in the country.

The University at Buffalo is building a **James Joyce Museum** at its South Campus to house its massive collection of Joyce manuscripts, letters and photographs.

The reinvigorated **Canalside district**, downtown at the Buffalo River, continues to evolve with the addition of the Buffalo Heritage Carousel and the Longshed, where Buffalo Maritime Center volunteers are building a replica of the Seneca Chief, an Erie Canal packet boat.

Dozens of murals by local and internationally renowned artists have brightened the once-faded streets of Buffalo with dazzling displays of color.

The former LaSalle Park is being transformed into **Ralph C. Wilson Centennial Park**, with the goal of creating a world-class waterfront destination at the 100-acre site where Lake Erie meets the Niagara River.

RIGHT: Elmwood Avenue by Jim Bush





But the frosting on Buffalo's cake is the once-in-a-lifetime expansion of the [Buffalo AKG Art Museum](#), formerly the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, at 1285 Elmwood Ave. The \$195-million construction project adds 30,000 square feet of space for the display of the museum's extraordinary collection of modern and contemporary art plus room for classrooms, community space and more than half an acre of new public green space. It's the most ambitious investment in Buffalo's cultural sector in the city's history and has the potential to elevate Buffalo's profile as a world-class cultural destination. In a very public way and on a grand scale, it represents the culmination of 40 years of investment and shared community labor to revive, rebuild and reimagine Buffalo.

"At a moment when the world is starting to pay attention to this extraordinary city," said Janne Sirén, the museum's Peggy Pierce Elfvig director, "the Buffalo AKG will present unforgettable museum experiences to visitors from across Western New York and around the globe with a level of intimacy and sophistication that is unique to Buffalo."

Much like Buffalo, the museum—with its new bridge connecting the original gallery built in 1905 with a sparkling 21st-century glass counterpart—will be more welcoming, inclusive, thought-provoking and fun than ever before. [BUF](#)

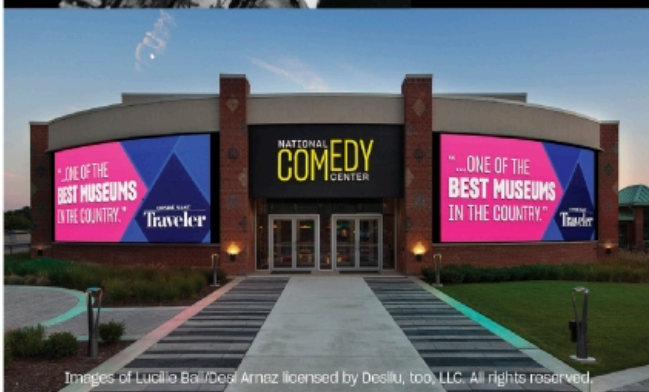
LEFT: *Colored Musicians Club and Museum* by Onion Studio
BELOW: *Canalside* by Rhea Anna



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at Buffalo State College

Harvey K. Littleton (1922–2013), *Blue/Orchid Square Descending Form*, #12-87-6, 1987; Gift of Stanford and Judith Lipsey, 2017.

A MUST-SEE *Art Destination*

BY **Michelle Kearns**



TOP & RIGHT: Buffalo AKG Art Museum and sculptural glass enclosure "Common Sky." Renderings courtesy Buffalo AKG Art Museum.

THE NEWLY EXPANDED AKG ART MUSEUM MAKES BUFFALO THE PLACE TO BE FOR ART LOVERS

Stroll through Buffalo's streets and you'll find abundant art and culture and the city's creative soul. The biggest star on the map? The expanded Buffalo AKG Art Museum debuts on Elmwood Avenue this year with a sparkling glass-paneled addition, a sculptural glass enclosure above a new gathering space, an elevated walkway and sweeping new views.

For more than a century, the AKG has been a beacon for lovers of modern and contemporary art. The collection includes some of the world's best-known 20th-century paintings and sculptures, as well as more recent works. Find pieces by familiar artists—Renoir, Picasso, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Matisse, Magritte, Warhol, O'Keefe—and emerging stars.

The original 1905 marble edifice, once known as the Albright Art Gallery after its benefactor John J. Albright, evokes a temple on the Acropolis in Athens, with 19-ton marble columns.

Next came the clean modernism and silvery white aluminum and black glass of the 1962 addition by architect Gordon Bunshaft, which led to the museum's first name change, after its modern art patron Seymour H. Knox Jr.

It was long-known as the Albright-Knox Art Gallery until the most significant transformation in its 160-year history resulted in what is now called the Buffalo AKG Art Museum.

The name now has a "G" for Jeffery Gundlach, the businessman and philanthropist who gave \$65 million to the

expansion capital campaign. The Gundlach building adds 30,000 square feet for special exhibitions and the museum's permanent collection.

Featuring terrazzo floors and a "black box" dark space gallery for projected media works and video art, the new building also offers visitors a vista of the Buffalo History Museum, Delaware Park and Scajaquada Creek from the second-floor sculpture terrace and the third-floor enclosed glass balcony.

Among the most notable developments on the rest of the campus is the installation of "Common Sky," a canopy of glass and mirrors by Olafur Eliasson and Sebastian Behmann, in the Seymour H. Knox building. Resting above and enclosing the courtyard, the piece creates a new town square that will be open year-round with free admission.

Already known among art lovers for one of the finest collections of modern art in North America, the museum's expansion and reimagining elevate the AKG's reputation as a must-see stop on the global art circuit.





While the AKG may be the lead story, it's not Buffalo's only draw for lovers of art and culture. Here's a sampling of some of Buffalo's other art museums, galleries and studio spaces:

Buffalo Arts Studio

Buffalo Arts Studio, at 2495 Main St., hosts 30 artists working in 20,000 square feet of space on the fifth floor of what was once a factory where Ford Model Ts and, later, Trico windshield wipers, were made.

Burchfield Penney Art Center

Across the street from the AKG Museum on the Buffalo State College campus, the **Burchfield Penney Art Center**, at 1300 Elmwood Ave., is a museum dedicated to regional artists and Charles E. Burchfield, best known for his hallucinatory, exuberant and spooky watercolor landscapes and cityscapes. A permanent exhibit highlight is Burchfield's recreated studio featuring his easel, stool, chair, cubbies and, yes, a stuffed owl.

CEPA Gallery

The contemporary **CEPA Gallery** photography-and-visual-arts center includes three galleries and a basement-level workshop space in the 130-year-old Market Arcade building in downtown Buffalo at 617 Main St. Photographers can book time in CEPA's black-and-white darkroom or the digital photo lab. The online gift shop features prints from the gallery's collection.

El Museo

The **El Museo** arts organization, founded by Latino artists, expanded its original mission to include underserved groups and an annual show by Buffalo Public School teachers and students. The 40-year-old nonprofit is in the Allentown neighborhood at 91 Allen St.

Hallwalls

Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center is housed in a former church at 341 Delaware Ave. It features eclectic programming of new and challenging contemporary art—from painting and sculpture to conceptual art, experimental video, documentary film, performance, fiction, jazz and new music.

TOP LEFT: *Hallwalls by Nancy J. Parisi*

BOTTOM LEFT: *Burchfield Penney Art Center by Rhea Anna*

OPPOSITE PAGE: *Allentown's Pushy Art Gallery, 104 Elmwood Ave., features work by local artists, and upcycled and repurposed items. Photo by Nancy J. Parisi.*





University at Buffalo Art Galleries

The [Center for the Arts](#) on the suburban North Campus and the [Anderson Gallery](#) at 1 Martha Jackson Place, near the older city South Campus, are the University at Buffalo galleries.

K Art

One of the only Native American-owned commercial galleries focusing on the works of Native American, First Nations and Indigenous artists, [K Art's](#) home at 808 Main St. is on the traditional lands of the Seneca Nation of Indians and close to their current territories. The design, art and event space is in an Allentown district brownstone.

Raft of Sanity

The [Raft of Sanity](#) gallery, founded by artists and curators Elisabeth Samuels and Emily Tucker, shows painting and sculpture by local and national artists. Find their second-floor space in a former auto body and wire factory at 1255 Niagara St., a lively part of the city's old industrial waterfront.

Rivalry

This gallery, aka [Rivalry Projects](#), was founded by an artist and curator who combined gallery and work space at 106 College St. in the Allentown district. It represents emerging, mid-career and underrepresented artists with a focus on photography. [BUF](#)



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BY CHRISTA GLENNIE

SAMPLE CUISINES FROM AROUND THE WORLD WITHOUT A PASSPORT

Buffalo, a city built by immigrants, can trace its signature dishes to the food traditions of Buffalo's first wave of new residents from places like Ireland, Germany, Italy and Eastern Europe. In the last 15 years, a modern influx from countries like Bangladesh, Burma, Somalia, Sudan, Ghana and Yemen has deliciously transformed the city's food scene.

As Western New York has become home to 70,000 newcomers from all over the world, the volume of immigrant-owned eateries has grown exponentially. The offerings evolve constantly. New restaurateurs move from pop-ups and market stands to food trucks and full-service, sit-down restaurants. Here's our guide to some of the best—from classic to cutting edge.

Real Deal Mexican

There's been an explosion of restaurants pulsing with the heart and soul of Mexico, serving tacos and Mexican specialties.

- **La Divina—Kenmore**
2896 Delaware Ave.
(716) 447-8989
facebook.com/LaDivinaUno
- **La Divina Dos—Williamsville**
4125 Transit Road
(716) 580-7674
orderladivinados.com

Tortas, tacos and Mexican street food are favorites here. Counter service is casual and swift. Seating is limited and many take their food to go. Both locations are affordable, fast and reliably tasty.

Other Hispanic Options

Buffalo, with a strong Hispanic community, has some pretty great examples of the cuisine, including Puerto Rican.

- **Niagara Cafe—Buffalo**
525 Niagara St.
(716) 885-2233
niagaracaferestaurant.com

Takeout or stay in, but when you visit, be sure to order an extra chicken to take home for sandwiches tomorrow. Niagara Cafe is known for its rotisserie chicken as well as its excellent Puerto Rican fare like pastelitos and roasted pork. Fresh tostones, yellow rice with pigeon peas, maduros, fried pork chops, bacalao—everything here is well made and affordable.

LEFT: *Lin Restuarant* by Drew Brown



The Middle East Beckons

Middle Eastern cuisine is something the area has in abundance. Much like the taco explosion, this region's food has taken off here in terms of representation and options.

- **OR by Falafel Bar—Amherst**
3545 Sheridan Drive
(716) 436-7000
thefalafelbar.com

At Falafel Bar, diners eat the same dishes owner Oded Rauvenpoor enjoyed throughout his childhood. The menu features recipes from Libya, Greece, Israel and Iran. Here you can find delicacies unavailable elsewhere, including chicken baharat, brik, Israeli schnitzel, sabih from Iraq and, on very special occasions, the elusive and highly Instagrammable Georgian khachapuri. With such an incredible array of choices, a nice dining room and the ability to accommodate almost every dietary restriction, it's no wonder Rauvenpoor and his family have been in business for decades.

Burmese or Bust

Many immigrants streaming into the city over the last 15 years are from Myanmar, formerly Burma, making Buffalo home to one of the largest populations of Burmese immigrants in the country. While Burmese restaurants often focus on Thai and Chinese dishes, one daring restaurateur who made his name as a sushi chef changed that by launching Sun Cuisines.

- **Sun Cuisines—Buffalo**
1989 Niagara St.
(716) 447-0202
- **Sun Cuisines—Williamsville**
5759 Main St.
(716) 313-2211
suncuisines.com

Kevin and Stephanie Lin opened the city's first Burmese restaurant inside a neighborhood grocery store in 2010. Since then, Sun has expanded to two restaurants serving tea leaf salad, hot and sour deep-fried gourd called buthi jyaw, and ono koksware, the most flavorful chicken and coconut soup ever. The couple's comfort with sushi led them to develop another unique aspect on their menu: rolls made with forbidden black rice, a particularly nutritious and flavorful grain.



A Tasting Adventure

Buffalo's international cuisine options span the globe, and the region, and the research is delicious. Consider jollof rice with a great tomatoey chew and crispy seasoned chicken, Ghanaian-style, at [Yalleys African Restaurant](#), 290 Kenmore Ave., in the city's northern neighborhood. Try Bangladeshi spice-marinated chicken, lamb and shrimp at [Buffalo Tikka House](#), 948 Main St. [Lucy East African Cuisine](#), 916 Tonawanda St., is beloved for meals on its plate-sized fermented bread and vegetarian fare. At the Yemeni oasis [Al Mandy](#) at 797 Broadway, start your meal with a savory broth appetizer and try their speciality: tender, braised lamb. Come to Buffalo in the fall of 2023 and explore more restaurants and businesses launched by the city's newest immigrants at the expanded [West Side Bazaar](#). Set to reopen at a renovated, Prohibition-era warehouse at 1432 Niagara St., the new home to 19 businesses will include 10 kitchens. Check [wedibuffalo.org](#) for updates. [BUF](#)

LEFT PAGE: Maria Hernandez of Niagara Cafe by Drew Brown

RIGHT PAGE: Kevin and Stephanie Lin of Sun Cuisines by Nancy J. Parisi

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Five Outdoor Adventures

EXPLORE THE SCENIC WATERWAYS AND TRAILS OF BUFFALO NIAGARA

BY **Ed Healy**

Buffalo is an under-the-radar outdoor adventure mecca. We're located on one of the best fisheries in North America. We hike along the churning whitewater at Devil's Hole State Park in Niagara Falls and mountain bike at Sprague Brook Park in the nearby Boston Hills.

There's kayaking in downtown Buffalo's Elevator Alley, windsurfing at Gallagher Beach on Fuhrmann Boulevard, sailing all summer long on Lake Erie and paddleboard yoga at Wilkeson Pointe in the Outer Harbor. When the snowpack melts in spring, there's rafting on Cattaraugus Creek rapids in the wild solitude of Zoar Valley in Gowanda. It's no exaggeration to say there aren't many places where you have so many opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors.

ABOVE: Kayaking the Buffalo River by Ed Healy
RIGHT PAGE: Sailing Lake Erie by Dylan Buyskes

Fishing

The variety and quality of fishing in and around Buffalo is simply astounding. The waters of Buffalo Harbor teem with smallmouth bass and walleyes while the nearby Niagara River is home to massive muskellunge. A short drive away, deeper, colder Lake Ontario provides a perfect habitat for trout and salmon. In fact, there may not be another spot in North America where so many species thrive within casting distance of a major metropolitan area. Pro tip: Hire one of Buffalo's many charter boat captains to get the inside track on where to find the fish.

Hiking

The wonders of Western New York don't stop at the brink of Niagara Falls. Just downstream from the world's most famous waterfall, you'll find several miles of hiking trails at [Devil's Hole State Park](#) and [Whirlpool State Park](#) that take you deep into the heart of the magnificent Niagara Gorge far from the viewing platforms, souvenir stands and tourist attractions that command the typical visitor's attention. It's one of "the unexpected Buffalo's" best kept secrets.

Kayaking

There was a time in the not-too-distant past when a kayak in Buffalo was a curiosity. Not anymore. Today, they are seen lashed to the tops of cars from April through November. Multiple outfitters along the Buffalo River and the Lake Erie waterfront offer boats for rent and guided tours. While there's no whitewater to test your paddling skills in the city of Buffalo, there is a genuinely unique stretch of the Buffalo River known hereabouts as Elevator Alley that's unlike anything you've ever

seen. Here you'll paddle past massive grain elevators soaring more than a hundred feet over the river, creating a concrete canyon that's made to be photographed.

Sailing

Buffalo's position at the merging of Lake Erie into the Niagara River makes it a perfect spot for all types of watersports—and sailing is among the biggest summertime pursuits in the Queen City of the Great Lakes. Weekly regattas and competitions with nearby yacht clubs keep the waters outside the Buffalo breakwall bustling with boats. One way for a visitor to get out on the water is to charter a boat from [Seven Seas Sailing](#) at 284 Fuhrmann Blvd. Two-hour picnic sails are available in the afternoon and evening all summer long.

Biking

Buffalo has blossomed into a bike-friendly city in recent years. Miles of designated bike lanes and bike paths have been built throughout the region, and [Reddy Bikeshare's](#) distinctive red bike rentals, which can be found all around town, make two-wheeling an easy option for visitors. For travelers who love to experience a new city by bike, spend \$1, hop on board the [Queen City Bike Ferry](#) at 44 Prime St. and head to the Outer Harbor. Here you'll find easy access to the historic [Buffalo Lighthouse](#) at 1 Fuhrmann Blvd., [Buffalo Harbor State Park](#) at 1111 Fuhrmann Blvd., [Tiff Nature Preserve](#) at 1200 Fuhrmann Blvd. and miles of paved bike paths. Pro tip: Sunsets at [Wilkeson Pointe](#) are a Buffalo classic and sure to generate lots of likes on your Instagram feed. [BUF](#)



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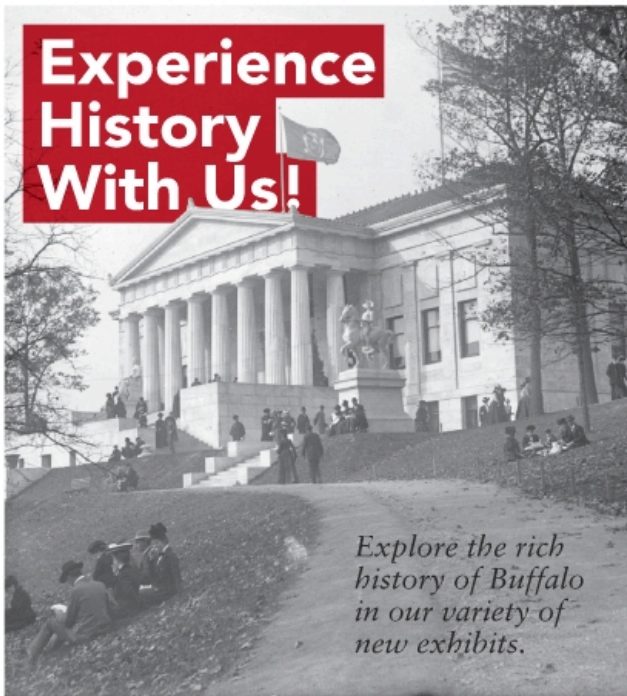
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Kids IN TOW

Buffalo's Family Favorites

BY *Lulu Steff*



LATELY, OUR FAMILY VACATIONS have been close to the deserts and mountains of our Southwestern home. So, it was a thrill for all four of us to get on a plane and head to the lush, green terrain of New York state. From our base in Buffalo, it was a short 20-minute drive to Niagara Falls, one of the world's must-see destinations for families. My 7-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter adored donning Maid of the Mist slickers to get up close and drenched by the falling water.

Yet, it was the abundance of other kid-related fun that we discovered during our stay in Buffalo that has me checking airfare and planning to come back.

Here's what we found.

Family Fun Starts at the Water

Canalside, at the foot of Main Street, and nearby **RiverWorks**, at 359 Ganson St., are the hub of family activities in the city, with a children's museum, solar-powered carousel, ice-skating in winter and in summer, paddleboats, water bikes and kayaks. There's a new Ferris wheel and the chance to go rock climbing on a grain elevator!



ABOVE: *Water Bikes of Buffalo* by Paget Films

LEFT PAGE: *Explore & More Children's Museum* by Meccay Photography

Explore & More Children's Museum

The museum's exhibits, at 130 Main St., reveal the stories of life in Buffalo—its history, geography, agriculture and architecture. There's a rooftop tree house for children of all abilities and a water feature with cascades and a spot for setting toy boats afloat. The farm area has a lifelike cow that really can be milked. There's construction worker gear, like hard hats and safety vests for everyone to wear as they play. Make a paper parachute, put it in a tube with blowing air and watch it fly. My kids loved the car wash. Put on an over-the-shoulder car costume, head down the wash road and try out tubes and gears for soaping up a mini Volkswagen Beetle. We had a great time here!

Buffalo Heritage Carousel

At \$1 a ride, everyone can try their first, second and even third favorite seat. There are 34 animals and three chariots to choose from, ranging from a regal tiger to a roaring blue-green dragon sea monster.

Built in 1924 in nearby North Tonawanda, the [Buffalo Heritage Carousel](#), at 44 Prime St., spent six decades in storage before being lovingly restored by local artisans and moved to a new home on Buffalo's waterfront at Canalside in 2021. Located inside a cupola-topped roundhouse, the carousel turns to music from the original Wurlitzer organ.



Pirate Adventure Cruise

The look of sheer delight on the kids' faces when they found out there would be a treasure hunt on the Pirate Adventure cruise aboard the [Spirit of Buffalo](#) schooner, also on Prime Street, was enough to make the trip to Buffalo worth it. I genuinely enjoyed the pirate stories and music as much as the kids. As we sailed, I got a good look at the old lighthouse on the Buffalo River, the grand City Hall and the downtown skyline.

Buffalo RiverWorks

This entertainment center and brewery, at 359 Ganson St., that emerged from defunct grain silos on the Buffalo River is now a playground for every age, including hard-to-please teenagers. My 7-year-old son was delighted to find that he just made the age minimum for the high ropes course. Together we scaled towers, crossed bridges and ziplined back to the ground. My

husband and 4-year-old daughter happily played cornhole and Kan Jam. All four of us went for a ride on the [Buffal-O" Ferris Wheel](#), which features a special seat for riders with disabilities. For a break in our busy day, we relaxed in the beer garden and got a whiff of Cheerios roasting at the General Mills factory, just down river.



ABOVE: Buffalo Museum of Science by Rhea Anna

FAR LEFT: Buffalo Heritage Carousel by Meccay Photography

LEFT: Buffalo RiverWorks rock climbing by Grant Taylor



ABOVE: The Buffalo Zoo by Nancy Parisi

The Buffalo Zoo

This shady 24-acre park with winding paths is sized just right for a pleasant and walkable visit for families with kids of any age. What started out in 1870 with a flock of sheep, a pair of bison and eight elk has evolved into the modern [Buffalo Zoo](#), at 300 Parkside Ave, that exhibits animals and plants in ecological habitats representing biomes from around the world.

We said “Hi” to the curious meerkats, giraffes and the lioness and her cubs. They are among the Africa natives at the zoo, along with gorillas, zebras and hyenas. We stopped to take in the mid-19th-century Erie Canal-era farm exhibit and petting zoo. A mule who may or may not be named Sal gazed at us with patient eyes. But my kids’ favorite had to be the polar bears frolicking in their pool.

Buffalo Museum of Science

This elegant institution, at 1020 Humboldt Parkway, opened in 1929 and is a kid-pleasing mash-up of science, natural history and children’s museums. Its exhibits about the Earth, space and solar system and kids’ programming turned us into fans.

For those fond of the prehistoric, there are enchanting exhibits like Seymour the Mastodon, a skeletal centerpiece on the main

floor. His magnificent tusks curve toward each other like giant arms. Head to the second floor for more details of the bygone at the “Rethink Extinct” exhibit. Take a good look at a perfectly intact egg from the extinct, nearly 10-foot-tall elephant bird that once roamed Madagascar.

Interactive highlights captivated our young ones, like the spot where kids can dig for fossils, the giant brain touchscreen and lessons about the human body, and learning what the planets smell like. I left knowing that Jupiter smells like ammonia and two hours at the museum wasn’t long enough.

Theatre of Youth

This theater, at 203 Allen St., puts on shows that young people connect with. As my kids giggled at the silly moments on stage, I was taking in the retro details of the gorgeous space, like the leaded glass windows and domed ceiling. Built in 1913, the Allendale Theatre was one of Buffalo’s first neighborhood theaters.

After the show, we grabbed a bite to eat at nearby Colter Bay and walked around the Allentown neighborhood. As I peeked into gallery windows and busy restaurants—my kids excitedly chatting away—I was certain that we’d be back. [BUF](#)



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Photo by:
Ben Read



ABOVE: Shea's Buffalo Theatre by Grant Taylor

BUFFALO'S GOT THE INGREDIENTS FOR A PERFECT EVENING

Looking for love in all the wrong places? Here's a menu of date night recommendations—from the intimate and elegant to the adventurous and arty—that will make your night out in Buffalo one to remember.

For a meal that feels luxurious and service that makes you feel like royalty, [Ristorante Lombardo](#), or what locals call Lombardo's, is an excellent choice. You'll be welcomed to 1198 Hertel Ave. by a towering mural of Mark Twain and his friend John Lewis, by world-renowned Brazilian artist Eduardo Kobra, overlooking the parking lot. That may be followed by a warm greeting from Tommy Lombardo, whose family has owned the restaurant since 1975. Order the Caesar salad for two, tossed and served tableside. Pick

out a wood-fired pizza, or feast on pan-seared scallops, lobster ravioli or their classic carbonara.

If craft cocktails and small plates are your thing, try the [Dapper Goose](#) at 491 Amherst St. in the Black Rock neighborhood. This charming bistro is an innovative refuge. With an open dining room, well-spaced tables and stamped-tin ceiling tiles, it has a light, inviting ambiance, complemented by thoughtful service and an intriguing menu.

If you're looking for a down-home good time and great music, [Sportsmen's Tavern](#) at 326 Amherst St., also in Black Rock, is the place to be. This is one of the best live music venues in the country, hosting more than 40 shows a month with acts leaning heavily in the direction of Americana, alt-country, rock and blues. The beer's cold. The people friendly. And the wings, well, let's just say they know what they're doing in the Sportsmen's kitchen.

If you'd like your dinner with a view, make a reservation for two at the [Terrace Restaurant](#). Inside a century-old former boathouse at 199 Lincoln Parkway, the Terrace looks out on Hoyt Lake in Delaware Park and the Buffalo History Museum. Grab a table on the patio, order a plate of shrimp and grits and a bottle of chilled wine, and enjoy an evening that's easy on the eyes.

Elegant surroundings, cocktails and culture await concertgoers visiting [Marcato](#) in the lower level of Kleinhans Music Hall, at 3 Symphony Circle, the mid-century home of the [Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra](#). Designed by the legendary father-and-son team of Eliel and Eero Saarinen, Kleinhans is the height of modernist chic. Enjoy dinner and drinks before heading upstairs for an evening concert.

For a classic Buffalo experience, head to the Theatre District. Have dinner at the [ChopHouse](#) at 282 Franklin St., [Bacchus](#) at 56 W. Chippewa St. or [Patina 250](#) at 250 Delaware Ave. followed by a show at [Shea's Performing Arts Center](#) at 650 Main St. This former movie palace has become the city's showcase stop for nationally touring Broadway shows, rock

concerts and comedy. The opulent chandeliers, red carpeted stairs and Tiffany-designed interior give Shea's its old school glamour.

The Allentown district is known for its funky and fun urban atmosphere. If that's what you're looking for, try [Billy Club](#), at 228 Allen St., where cosmopolitan cuisine and craft cocktails are on the menu, served by a knowledgeable and attentive staff. After dinner head around the corner to [Pausa Art House](#), at 19 Wadsworth St., for an evening of jazz in a hip and intimate space.

Finally, romantic outdoor opportunities abound in a city full of parks and parkways and new waterfront vantage points. But first you'll need a picnic. We recommend stocking up in the Five Points neighborhood, where Rhode Island, Brayton and West Utica streets intersect. Within one block you'll find some of the most delicious croissants outside of Paris at [Butter Block](#), at 426 Rhode Island St., and savory sandwiches and caffeinated drinks at [Remedy House](#), at 429 Rhode Island St. Next door, explore the large selection of wines at [Paradise Wine](#), at 435 Rhode Island St. Collect your goodies and head to the pergola at the rose garden at 199 Lincoln Parkway at [Delaware Park](#). [BUF](#)



ABOVE: *The Little Club* by Eric Frick



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Who We With? THE BILLS!

TAILGATE STORIES WITH THE FAMOUS BILLS CHEFS

BY **Michelle Kearns**
PHOTOS **Nancy J. Parisi**



AN INTREPID GAME-DAY MOVE to wear their goofy chef hats into the Bills' football stadium brought old friends closer together and led to local fame as two of the craziest Bills boosters in a city full of them. For Richard Peterson and Derrick Norman, the serendipitous decision changed their lives soon after a TV camera broadcast Peterson and his "Who we with?" hat. Standing next to him was Norman wearing the reply: "The Bills."

The rest is history—23 years long—that led to their current stature: Everyone knows them as the Bills Chefs. They get recognized by strangers at the grocery store, serve up a tailgate rib feast with a secret sauce for 200 in the stadium lot, have a billboard photo by one of the entry gates and starred in a Pepsi commercial.

"We didn't expect it. We're just a couple guys having fun, and the thing just kind of grew by leaps and bounds," said Peterson. "We were just doing typical tailgate stuff like everybody else. For whatever reason, it just kind of took off on us."

In Pepsi's 2021 "Bills Mafia" commercial, the chefs joined other fans with idiosyncratic ways of cheering the team on to victory—from a tailgater who has his face squirted with ketchup and mustard to the woman who brings fans together for charitable causes and a man who gives away Pepsi by the case.

The ad shows Peterson and Norman arriving in the RV parking lot at 6 a.m.

"This many Bills fans? Trusting us with their barbecue?" Norman says in the ad.

"Man, that feels good," Peterson replies.



Their surprise Bills journey has meant better football, and friendship and merrymaking, in unique Buffalo style.

Peterson and Norman couldn't have predicted any of this. They were friendly but not close after their years on the Seneca Vocational High School football and track teams. It wasn't until they went to a few Bills games together buying high-priced, last-minute tickets from scalpers that they decided on season tickets.

For that first 1999 game as season ticket holders, they grilled for their parking lot tailgate. They had to turn the hot dogs with their fingers because Peterson forgot utensils. He had not, however, forgotten the chefs' hats. The artist at the mall who he originally paid to airbrush them now insists on painting the

“We’re just a couple guys having fun, and the thing just kind of grew by leaps and bounds.”

new season hats—last year's hats featured the receiver and quarterback duo Stefon Diggs and Josh Allen—for free.

For both men, known to many by their nicknames Chefs Poo and Norm, the experience has been a lesson in community and becoming a little more extroverted.

“I’m kind of a quiet person.

Now it’s just kind of like, ‘Oh, OK, I didn’t think I had that in me.’ I’m more outgoing,” said Peterson, who builds and repairs bus shelters for the Niagara Frontier Transit Authority. “It’s kind of opened me up a little bit more to get out and experience things.”

His highlight: When Bills players recognize them at their seats in the first row by the end zone. A few years ago, tight end Lee Smith made a touchdown and then pointed at Peterson and



Norman. He was signaling that he was aiming his celebratory “Lambeau Leap” over them. Then the six-foot-six, 265-pound player cleared the wall and tumbled into the fans. The move, with Peterson and Norman looking on, made ESPN’s “C’mon Man!” blooper highlights.

“You could see our faces real good,” said Peterson. “It was pretty hilarious. Everybody was giving us the business because we let him fall down.”

One of Norman’s favorite moments was the time a Bills camera crew came to Peterson’s house for what they thought was an interview. When asked, “Who do you think was the Buffalo Bills best, all-time running back?” Norman and Peterson answered, “Thurman Thomas.”

Then they felt a tap on their shoulders.

“We’re sitting on the couch and someone puts his arms around us. We look behind our shoulders and it was him! We jumped up off the couch. ‘Oh, my God, it’s Thurman Thomas!’” said Norman, a retired Buffalo firefighter.

The Football Hall of Famer had come by to personally deliver their season tickets. “So now every time he sees us, he knows us as ‘The Chefs,’” Norman said. “He remembers that. He always brings it up.”



As their fame has grown, their roles as celebrity members of the Buffalo Bills community have been a lot of fun and, perhaps, life changing.

Norman is more community minded. He uses his status to be thoughtful and kind and set a good example for young people who he knows look up to him. “I’m the same person,” Norman said, “but with a bigger heart.”

Peterson also learned something about the fans in his hometown. “All the people that we’ve met and the places that we’ve been, the opportunities that were bestowed upon us, it just shows that Buffalo really is the ‘City of Good Neighbors’ ... We hear it all the time. They’re calling us ‘The Chefs.’ They want our autographs. I’m just amazed,” he said. “The Buffalo fans are just rabid fans. They like to have a good time. You never know what’s going to happen.” [BUF](#)

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ABOVE: Guaranty Building by Ed Healy

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46 | 2023 Official Buffalo Touring Guide

The Richardson Olmsted Campus

Once known as the Buffalo State Asylum for the Insane, the National Historic Landmark [Richardson Olmsted Campus](#), at 44 Forest Ave., had its central buildings restored and repurposed as the Richardson Hotel. Designed in 1870 by architect Henry Hobson Richardson and the famed landscape team of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, the spacious, light-filled spaces and the bucolic campus were intended to create a therapeutic environment for patients suffering from mental illness. Today, this singular property with its two central towers topped with steep, pointed copper roofs—aged to a soft green patina—has more buildings to restore and plans to adapt for the needs of a new century.

Kleinhans Music Hall

Another National Historic Landmark in Buffalo's portfolio of great buildings. Designed by the Finnish father-and-son team of Eliel and Eero Saarinen, [Kleinhans Music Hall](#) on Symphony Circle is a curving mid-century modern masterpiece, encircled by a reflecting pool in a leafy residential neighborhood facing a parkway planned by Frederick Law Olmsted. Opened in 1940, Kleinhans is home to the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and host to the likes of Yo-Yo Ma, Joshua Bell and Renee Fleming.

Its curvilinear shape echoes the instruments played inside. The graceful sweep of its stairways and warm wood walls beckon a visitor with the modernist aesthetic. Of course, the best way to experience the grandeur of Kleinhans is during one of the many concerts held here.

Guaranty Building

Arguably the greatest of the early skyscrapers, the **Guaranty Building** opened at 140 Pearl St. in downtown Buffalo in 1896. It was designed by Louis Sullivan, considered the “Father of the Skyscraper” and mentor to the young Frank Lloyd Wright. Sullivan rejected traditional horizontal designs, common at the time, and accentuated the building’s steel frame and vertical climb with intricately decorated terracotta tiles with details that echo flowers, vines and seedpods. They lead to the rooftop where they spread at the cornices like tree branches. The first-floor interpretive center is a museum-quality experience that should not be missed.

The Martin House

The **Martin House**, at 125 Jewett Parkway, is an exquisite example of how Frank Lloyd Wright blended interior space with the surrounding landscape. Six buildings, built on the grounds between 1903 and 1906, cover more than 30,000 square feet and feature miles of white oak trim, horizontal lines of Roman brick set off by gold mortar, minimal ornamentation and distinctive art glass. Windows sparkle with iridescent panes that feature the abstract tree of life pattern that has become synonymous with Wright’s work. He kept the plans for the Martin House estate over his drafting table for more than 50 years and referred to the house as “a well-nigh perfect composition.”

Buffalo City Hall

Perhaps the city’s most iconic building, **Buffalo City Hall** holds center stage downtown on Niagara Square with its Art Deco beauty. Tour the building and see columns shaped like bundled reeds intended to illustrate strength in unity. Riveters, truckers and aviators in the frieze above the entry celebrate the citizens of Buffalo. Take the elevator to the 13th floor for a glimpse of the extraordinary art-glass sunburst ceiling in the Common Council Chambers. On a clear day you can see the mists of Niagara Falls from the observation deck on the 28th floor. **BUF**



TOP: The Martin House by Rhea Anna
BOTTOM: Buffalo City Hall by Ed Healy

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Buffalo

**SAMPLING SOME
OF BUFFALO'S BEST**

BY **Christa Glennie**

EVERY TIME I TAKE VISITORS ON A TOUR OF THE QUEEN CITY, as I have almost 100 times, I am filled with quiet gratification when their eyes widen at the unexpected: the tucked-away and beautiful Wilkeson Pointe beachfront park, our jaw-dropping collection of world-class architecture, the lush urban farms east and west of the downtown core, sumptuous restaurant meals and a modern art collection that wows from the outside in.

From the lowbrow to the highbrow, the modern to the historic, there are a myriad of ways to experience Buffalo. For me, its facets are as familiar as a comfortable pair of jeans. Yet, by the day, they manage to thrill me anew. Try my favorite short course itinerary.



FRIDAY

3 to 5 p.m.

Art sets us apart

First stop, the [Burchfield Penney Art Center](#) at 1300 Elmwood Ave. It specializes in art with regional connections and is named in part for Charles E. Burchfield, the inventive 20th-century watercolorist who spent much of his life in Buffalo. He is best known for his transcendental, mystical interpretations of landscapes and street scenes. The museum has the largest public collection of his work. In an interplay of pieces from its archives, works by local artists and select items on loan, it stages immersive, savvy and memorable exhibits.

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Lucky you, it's happy hour!

Check into your lodgings, change for dinner and head downtown to [Lucky Day Whiskey Bar](#) at 32 Pearl St. Built around the turn of the last century as a Freemason's temple, its sexy, dark atmosphere is an ideal backdrop for its well-curated selection of spirits, beer and wine. Lucky Day, with its beautiful, polished bar, is an excellent spot for a classic cocktail. Here, strict adherence to standards, sans fluff, is refreshing. Barkeeps are friendly without being intrusive, making it easy to pull up a stool whether you're alone or with others.

7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Save room for dessert

Three seasons a year you can easily walk the quarter-mile from Lucky Day to [Marble + Rye](#) at 112 Genesee St., even in heels. The restaurant is modern and highly Instagrammable, but you'll forget to take pictures once the drinks and food begin to arrive. Bar manager Megan Lee offers one of the most nuanced, intellectual, vibrant cocktail menus I've ever seen. Her informed, food-friendly wine list matches fare that is hyperlocal, made from scratch and consistently delicious. The menu reads simply, but anything served by chef and owner Michael Dimmer has gone through an intense series of trials before making the list. Order with confidence. Whatever you do, save room for ice cream! The sweet side of the M&R menu never disappoints.

When the plates are cleared, consider staying for a drink and bar chatter. Or, walk down Genesee towards East Huron Street and the beautifully lit Electric Tower and Roosevelt Plaza. Have a nightcap close by at the [Graylynn Gin Bar](#) at 537 Main St. or [Fathey Beer Company](#) at 5 Genesee St.

LEFT PAGE & BELOW: *Flamingo boats and Fathey Beer Company*
by Randy Duchaine



SATURDAY



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Remedy House, Elmwood Village Farmers Market and Five Points Bakery by Randy Duchaine

8 to 11 a.m. Coffee, breakfast and a farmers market

Early birds should seize the chance to stroll through one of Buffalo's bustling farmers markets. First, grab a breakfast sandwich and house-roasted coffee at **Remedy House**, 429 Rhode Island St., in the city's eclectic Five Points neighborhood. Find killer cinnamon rolls and apple cake within the quirky and cozy brick environs of **Five Points Bakery**, 44 Brayton St. Nearby, **Butter Block**, a precision-driven patisserie, crafts the best croissants in the area at 426 Rhode Island St.

Then head a few blocks north to the **Elmwood Village Farmers Market** on Bidwell Parkway. Locavores, chefs and home cooks come early for the best selection of produce and prepared goods. Everything sold must be handmade or grown locally. Most everything is extraordinary.

From here, explore the Elmwood Village. Or follow Lincoln Parkway to the very walkable Rumsey Woods section of Frederick Law Olmsted's **Delaware Park** at Rumsey Road. Soak up some nature, jog a little or wander to nearby Hoyt Lake and rent a vessel in the Buffalo Maritime Center's whimsical and sturdy fleet: A pink flamingo, aka FLOATmingo, paddle boat or a rowboat can usually be had in the warm weather months, May through October.

1 to 3 p.m. Dip into Buffalo's collection of architectural gems

Nestled into the city's pastoral, tree-lined Parkside neighborhood at 125 Jewett Parkway, visitors will find the **Martin House**, one of Buffalo's Frank Lloyd Wright originals. Delve into its history, feats of engineering and stunning details. Book a tour with a docent or try an audio tour.

Head back to your lodging to rest and refresh before dinner and a night on the town.

7 p.m. Small plates, big experience

North Buffalo is a sweet neighborhood with deep Italian roots mixed with a complement of the new. **The Little Club**, at 1197 Hertel Ave., is a congenial place to experience some of each. Meet people of all ages, discover wines and enjoy delectable small plates and satisfying entrées. Restaurateurs Tommy and Mary Lombardo offer guests understated sophistication stitched with a warm, familial vibe.

After-dinner drinks

Allentown is the place to be after dark. This bohemian, artsy neighborhood is a registered National Historic District known for embracing quirk, culture and anything offbeat. This Buffalo 101 itinerary requires that you visit haunts like the dog-eared music venue **Nietzsche's**, at 248 Allen St., and one of the greatest dive bars of all time, the **Old Pink**, at 223 Allen St. Try the best steak sandwich ever. Be ready. Buffalonians customarily welcome out-of-towners with convivial big-heartedness—and shots!

SUNDAY



11:30 a.m.
Join the brunch bunch

Sleep in, check out of your hotel and head downtown to [Toutant](#), at 437 Ellicott St. Louisiana-native and chef James Roberts shares his low-country version of Sunday breakfast with homey shrimp and grits, hearty biscuits and gravy, barbecue hash and hot mugs of chicory-blend coffee. Best known for its fried chicken dinner, also served at brunch, Toutant's pastry is an unsung hero. Its outrageously good cinnamon roll is a sweet undertaking best shared by the table at the top of the meal. [BUF](#)

ABOVE: *Toutant* by KC Kratt



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EAST AURORA'S LEGACY OF *Creativity*

THE HISTORY BEHIND BUFFALO'S ARTSY NEIGHBOR

BY **Drew Brown** • PHOTOS **Nancy J. Parisi**

IF EAST AURORA'S ARTS AND CRAFTS PIONEERS were alive today, they'd probably be smitten with the village's talented bakers, brewers, chefs, artists, artisans and intrepid entrepreneurs carrying the torch of creativity deep into a new century.

This new generation has inherited a legacy of handcrafted excellence from the metalsmiths, woodworkers, bookbinders, potters and other creatives who practiced their crafts and built East Aurora's [Roycroft Campus](#) in the first part of the 20th century. One hundred years later, the embers of imagination, ingenuity and craftsmanship still burn hot in East Aurora, a village 20 miles southeast of Buffalo.

At the [Schoolhouse Gallery](#), Roycroft Master Artisan Thomas Pafk embodies the principles that defined the Roycrofters. Using only traditional techniques and methods, Pafk crafts dining room tables, desks, chairs, picture frames and lamps of the highest quality, with clients coming from around North America to his workshop at 1054 Olean Road. As a Roycroft Renaissance artisan he's committed to keeping East Aurora traditions alive.

"East Aurora is a really unique town—what everybody likes to call the quintessential hometown," Pafk said, "but I like to think of East Aurora as more of an artist community. I think it's a very quirky place, and we'd like to keep East Aurora quirky."

[Rosie's Handcrafted Ice Cream](#), at 431 Main St., is a new addition to the village's expanding list of enterprising businesses. Taking advantage of the region's distinctive seasons, owners Cassie and Deacon Tasker's freshly churned flavors highlight seasonal offerings at their peak.

"East Aurora is a community where the details don't go unnoticed," Cassie Tasker said. "We source flavors from local businesses, such as coffee from Elm Street Bakery, maple syrup from Sunset Farms and cider from Mayer Brothers. And our customers let us know they love it."

"Opening Rosie's in East Aurora was a no-brainer," Deacon Tasker said. "This is a rewarding and encouraging place. Seeing the success of our friends and fellow businesses, like Blue Eyed Baker and 42 North, we knew we'd be embraced by the community."

On the eastern edge of town, at [42 North Brewing Company](#), at 25 Pine St., owner John Cimperman and head brewer Matt "Yeast Chef" Matuszewski source some basic ingredients for the brewery's beers near their own backyard. One sip of 42 North's beer and you'll be convinced they're on the right track for restoring the region's brewing legacy.

"42 North is fortunate to call East Aurora home," Cimperman said. "This community provides us creative inspiration with the Roycroft, recreational opportunities at Knox Park and Hunter's Creek, and access to locally sourced hops just a few miles down the road. East Aurora is a big part of the brewery's DNA."

East Aurora's annual [Borderland Music + Arts Festival](#), at Knox Farm State Park on Buffalo Road, is a fusion of all the fundamentals that the community holds dear. While an eclectic mix of Americana, alternative and roots music attracts the crowds, the festival celebrates the essence of East Aurora's artisanal identity by transforming the stables of Knox Farm

State Park into a marketplace of makers, Roycroft artisans and craftspeople.

Jennifer Brazill, festival co-founder, has been delighted by how the festival has come to reflect the authentic, friendly, welcoming spirit of Buffalo. "Once you get here and you learn it, you understand how amazing it is. How many layers there are to it. How the people are so salt of the earth," said Brazill. "I really try to bring that out in the vibe of our festival."

Not surprisingly, the Roycroft Campus, at 31 S. Grove St., remains at the center of East Aurora's culture of creativity. Through residency programs, workshops and classes, the legacy of the original Roycrofters lives on right where it all started.

"For 120 years, Elbert Hubbard's Roycroft Campus has been the heart of the East Aurora community," said Amizetta Haj, director of visitor engagement at the Roycroft Campus Corporation. "The philosophy and ideals of the Roycrofters serve as a guiding post for the modern age." [BUF](#)

OPPOSITE PAGE & LEFT: Roycroft Master Artisan Thomas Pafk at the Schoolhouse Gallery in East Aurora





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From a stop on the Underground Railroad to a new monument for Black veterans to a legendary club where jazz giants played into the wee hours, Buffalo's African American history runs deep. **Freedom's Footsteps**, a newly developed journey through Buffalo's Black history, will bring that heritage to life in a whole new way. Find out more about this exciting project at AfricanAmericanBuffalo.com.





Events

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

March

With two St. Patrick's Day parades, Buffalo celebrates the heritage of its proud, large Irish population with a weekend of celebrations. St. Patrick's Day weekend in Buffalo begins with the Old Neighborhood Parade. Taking place in Buffalo's Old First Ward neighborhood, you'll march past some of the city's premier Irish pubs and taverns. And Sunday's downtown parade sees thousands of spectators clad in green, white and orange as a procession of floats, cars and bagpipes cruise by.

DYNGUS DAY

April

Buffalo is the number one city for these traditional Polish festivities held the day after Easter commemorating the end of Lent. Few cities in America have as large of a Polish population as Buffalo—and none Dyngus harder. While the city's Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood, also known as Polonia, has the most partying per square block, the whole county gets in on the fun these days.

ALLENTOWN ART FESTIVAL

June

The Allentown Art Festival has been a fixture on the Buffalo cultural calendar for more than 60 years. First held in 1958 when it was known as "The Buffalo Art Festival," the event has come to signal the coming of Buffalo's summer season as thousands of Buffalonians and out-of-town visitors take to the streets to browse the beautiful art and handmade goods of local vendors.

JUNETEENTH

June

Considered one of the largest events of its kind in the United States, Juneteenth of Buffalo has been commemorated with a festival every year since 1976. Held in and around Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, it's highlighted by a parade, musical performances, food vendors and cultural activities showcasing the diversity of talent found in Buffalo's Black community.

TASTE OF BUFFALO

July

In a city known for its regional specialties, the Taste of Buffalo is an annual celebration of the foods that made Buffalo famous, as well as new additions to our regional menu. You'll find chicken wings, beef on weck and charbroiled hot dogs at the Taste, but you may also get to sample chicken tikka masala, Jamaican patties, gazpacho and Pad Thai, brought to Buffalo by newer arrivals from around the world. The Taste's menu is eclectic, inventive and sure to please every palate.

GARDEN WALK BUFFALO

July

Garden Walk Buffalo is the largest free, self-guided garden tour in the United States, featuring more than 300 private and public gardens in a two-day display of garden artistry. Held the last week of July, the event attracts thousands of garden lovers who walk the streets of Buffalo's Elmwood Village and Parkside neighborhoods, awed by the creativity and ingenuity of the gardens and delighted by hospitality of what one observer called Buffalo's "freakishly friendly" gardeners.



OPPOSITE PAGE & BOTTOM RIGHT: *Borderland Festival* courtesy of *Borderland*
 ABOVE: *Juneteenth* by KC Kratt

ERIE COUNTY FAIR

August

The Erie County Fair has been a community tradition since its founding in 1885. Nowadays, classic farm festival ingredients mix with the modern for 12 days of wonder and fun for all generations—from rides to food to agricultural showcases, classic American arts, the sensory-friendly and the far out. Bring a picnic. Help feed a calf. View the prize-winning chickens and their fine feathers. See llamas, a hypnotist, wood carvers and daring acrobatics. There's something for everyone!

ELMWOOD AVENUE FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

August

For a final summer hurrah, reserve the last weekend in August for the Elmwood Avenue Festival of the Arts. Stages set up along a six-block stretch of Elmwood Avenue host a wide array of the region's musicians, dancers and visual artists. The two days of arts includes a kids' area for the younger set featuring hand-crafted art challenges. Come wander, listen, find a stage and take a seat.

NATIONAL BUFFALO WING FESTIVAL

September

The Buffalo Wing Festival is a Labor Day weekend affair with two decades of history and a culinary tradition of offering wings from more than 25 different wing joints. After the wing eating contest, bobbing for wings in blue cheese and cooking demos, taste the classic flavors and unique spins on Buffalo's classic delicacy from all over Buffalo, the country and the world.

MUSIC IS ART

September

The free Music is Art festival is a full-day event. Its lineup and design are led by festival founder Robby Takac, the Goo Goo Dolls bassist and singer who expanded the festival to its current river-spanning size with 200 bands playing on 24 stages on both sides of the Buffalo River. Take a tiki boat back and forth between RiverWorks and Buffalo Riverfest Park to listen to a diverse musical menu that includes country music, punk, jazz, funk, rap, rockabilly and hip hop.

BORDERLAND MUSIC + ARTS FESTIVAL

September

The Borderland Music and Arts Festival celebrates the rich history and renaissance of the region with a two-day music and cultural festival set in one of the most scenic and storied grounds in all of New York State, Knox Farm State Park. Featuring local talent and touring national acts plus tons of artisans and craft brewers, you won't want to miss it.



THE *Last Word*

BY Jillian Hanesworth

• WELCOME TO MY BUFFALO •

When people ask, as they so often do, if Buffalo is a really cold place, I answer, “No, Buffalo is not always snowy.” Yet, I never say what Buffalo isn’t without telling people what Buffalo is.

WHEN I THINK OF MY HOME, I think of the art we design and share with ambition and love.

As the inaugural poet laureate of Buffalo, my job is to read at city events. It’s sometimes a surreal honor, like when a line from my poem “The Revolution Will Rhyme” gets quoted back to me. “The revolution will be led by Black women who are just tired enough to do it ourselves” was something I wrote in homage to those who fought during the civil rights movement.

Its popularity has shown me how words connect people and ideas. This fits with my ambition to develop my job so that it is more than a title. I want to build a platform so the poet laureates who follow me serve the community, help create awareness and social change, and celebrate what’s here.

I am no stranger to the beauty of my city or the unique ways we illustrate it, like the new, breathtaking murals that have come from a citywide art initiative. I love the ones in East Buffalo, the African American part of the city where I grew up. Edreys Wajed’s vivid portrait of the late Congressman John Lewis on a community

center wall reminds me to embed the fight for freedom in my work and be OK with causing a little good trouble.

A walk around the city is a recipe for inspiration like that. My Buffalo is not synonymous with cold. My Buffalo is synonymous with color, stories and music!

We share our lives at the Ujima Company theater, founded by the late Lorna Hill, who believed in the transformative, humanizing power of the stage.

The rhythms drummers play at the African American Cultural Center tell stories. So do the songs at the summer Funk Fest block party.

And as we heal from last spring’s shooting, we honor those who came before us, making the music and poetry that is part of us now.

Here, good things unite us. I am privileged to visit the misty roar of Niagara Falls whenever I need to clear my mind. Buffalonians know the parks and parkways designed by Frederick Law Olmsted himself. Within us we have the hot tang of the delicacy we can eat every day of the week if we feel like it. CHICKEN WINGS! They were invented here and now come from chefs, home cooks, taverns and restaurants everywhere. Our transcendent, surprising football team brings us together like nothing else. Go Bills!

My Buffalo embodies kind creativity. Neighbors will push your car out of the snow and push you to become what you’re too afraid to imagine. This is where a young Black woman like me becomes the first poet laureate in Buffalo’s history.

My city was once a secret, known to those connected by the 716 area code. We are no longer a secret.

Let the food, sounds and sights remind you of the people who created the culture here. Let the wonder grace your ears like music. Welcome to my Buffalo. [BUF](#)



Jillian Hanesworth is the inaugural poet laureate of Buffalo, a community organizer, author, award-winning spoken-word artist and founder of Literary Freedom, LLC, which she uses to develop spoken word and literacy access to empower communities to create and demand sustainable change.



LEFT: Love Black mural by Edreys Wajed and James Moffitt. Photo by Ed Healy.



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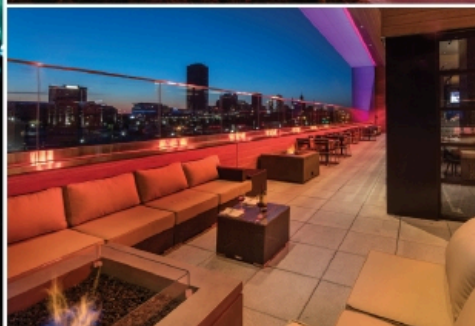


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